



Afternoon Alert - Wednesday, December 13, 2017

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HEADLINES

Noon news

All TV networks gave prominent top play to reports on an incident this morning in Okinawa in which a local child sustained a minor injury to his arm after a window fell from a U.S. military helicopter.

INTERNATIONAL

Secretary Tillerson expresses willingness to begin talks with DPRK without preconditions

All TV networks took up remarks made on Tuesday in Washington by Secretary of State Tillerson, who stressed that the United States is committed to realizing the denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula by saying that it will not accept North Korea's possession of nuclear weapons. At the same time, the Secretary stressed the importance of commencing dialogue with North Korea by saying: "They have to come to the table with a view that they do want to make a different choice.... We're ready to talk anytime North Korea would like to talk, and we're ready to have the first meeting without preconditions. Let's just meet. We can talk about the weather if you want." While admitting that it is difficult to hold dialogue in the face of North Korea's relentless provocations, the top U.S. diplomat also said: "It's not realistic to say we're only going to talk if you come to the table ready to give up your [nuclear] program."

As the remarks apparently reflected the Secretary's strong desire to resolve the nuclear and missile standoff through dialogue, NHK said they may signal a change in the Trump administration's policy of not starting dialogue unless Pyongyang shows its readiness for denuclearization first. Other broadcasters said it is unclear whether the Secretary's willingness to enter dialogue without preconditions is shared by other U.S. administration officials, including President Trump. Fuji TV

noted that although the Secretary's remarks apparently represented a major concession by Washington, White House Press Secretary Sanders said later that President Trump's views have not changed.

In an update, NHK took up press remarks by Chief Cabinet Secretary Suga, who commented on the Secretary's statements by saying: "I would like to avoid commenting on every remark made by the Secretary in the speech. The U.S. and Japanese leaders have held in-depth discussions on North Korea policy at multiple summits and they have agreed 100 percent on maximizing pressure on the DPRK.... We are aware that the White House has just announced that there is no change to the President's views on North Korea. There is also no change in Japan's policy of applying maximum pressure through all possible means in coordination with the United States so as to force North Korea to alter its course."

U.S., Japan confirm coordination on DPRK

NHK reported online on a meeting this morning in Tokyo between visiting U.S. Special Representative for North Korea Policy Yun and MOFA Asian and Oceanian Affairs Bureau Director General Kanasugi at which the two affirmed enhanced coordination to step up pressure on North Korea in order to press the defiant regime to give up on its nuclear and missile programs. The two diplomats also shared the importance of issuing a strong message to Pyongyang in an upcoming UN Security Council ministerial meeting in New York to be chaired by Foreign Minister Kono on Friday.

In a related story, TV-Asahi reported on the disclosure by several diplomatic sources that Special Representative Yun may hold informal talks with DPRK officials in Thailand tomorrow or later on the margins of an international conference, speculating that the two sides may be ready to start full-fledged dialogue.

- [U.S. ready to talk with N. Korea "without precondition": Tillerson](#) (Kyodo News)
- [China sends future-oriented messages at Nanjing massacre ceremony](#) (Kyodo News)
- [PM Abe: "Gov't will do everything it can to address wooden boats drifting ashore"](#) (Nikkei)
- [S. Korea's foreign minister to visit Japan by year-end](#) (Kyodo News)
- [Taiwan, Japan to hold maritime talks next week](#) (Kyodo News)
- [North Korean bodies and boats reach Japan's coasts, but more survivors, too](#) (The Japan Times)

- [Charles Jenkins, U.S. defector to North Korea and husband of former Japanese abductee Hitomi Soga, dies at 77](#) (The Japan Times)
- [MEXT Minister Yoshimasa Hayashi named head of Japan-China Parliamentarians' Friendship League](#) (Mainichi)
- [Japan plans regular forum on developing-world health care](#) (Nikkei Asian Review)
- [Jerusalem issue puts Japan's top envoy in a tight spot in the Middle East](#) (The Japan Times)
- [Doyukai chief reprimands Trump's Jerusalem decision](#) (Nikkei)
- [First comfort woman statue in Philippines erected in Manila](#) (Jiji Press)
- [Japan tops list of nations Chinese people want to visit](#) (Jiji Press)
- [U.S., Chinese intelligence bodies said working for Kim Jong Un's exile, installing next leader](#) (THEMIS)
- [Cartoon: Abe pilloried](#) (Akahata)

ECONOMY

High court orders suspension of No. 3 reactor at Ikata nuclear plant

NHK reported at 2 p.m. that the Hiroshima High Court revoked a lower court decision today and ordered the suspension of the No. 3 nuclear reactor at the Ikata Nuclear Power Plant in Ehime Prefecture, pointing out the possibility of pyroclastic flow reaching the nuclear plant in the event of a volcanic eruption of Mt. Aso. The network said this is the first high court decision on a series of injunctions filed with four district courts seeking to halt the No. 3 reactor, which is currently offline for a regular inspection. The network added that since the temporary injunction will remain effective until it is revoked, it has become highly likely that the operation of the nuclear reactor will be suspended even after the regular inspection ends in February 2018.

- [JR worker may have helped Obayashi](#) (The Japan News)
- [Maglev train bidding obstruction probe spreads to Shimizu, Taisei](#) (Kyodo News)
- [Toshiba, Western Digital end months-long legal battle over chip unit sale](#) (Kyodo News)
- [METI moving to expand subsidies for M&As involving SMEs](#) (Nikkei)

- [Toyota, Panasonic teaming to standardize electric-car batteries](#) (Nikkei Asian Review)

- [Editorial: Accord on EPA with EU a decision that defies a climate of protectionism](#) (The Japan News)

POLITICS

- [Prime minister's schedule on Dec. 12, 2017](#) (Nikkei)
- [Gov't appoints Marumo as JASDF chief of staff](#) (Asahi)
- [DP's prospects completely bleak with no consensus on proposals to rebuild party](#) (Yomiuri)

OPINION POLLS

- [Jiji Press public opinion poll on passenger cars](#) (Jiji Press Public Opinion Poll Bulletin)

SCIENCE

- [Japan's cooperation with U.S. to build moon station to be discussed at 2018 int'l forum](#) (Yomiuri)

EDUCATION

- [Gov't to give financial support to students preparing for higher education](#) (Mainichi)

SOCIETY

“Mercari” marketplace app changes consumption in Japan

NHK's "Close-up Gendai+" reported that a growing number of young Japanese are buying and selling second-hand goods on the Internet, saying that a new app called "mercari" that facilitates buying and selling goods on smartphones has been the driving force. About one million items are reportedly put up for sale on mercari every day. Young people apparently have no qualms about buying second-hand goods and think it's environmentally friendly and smart. According to the program, there is a new consumption cycle of buying new things and selling them online when they are no longer needed. The program said many companies are competing to launch similar services.

- [Japan Federation of Bar Associations sets quota of at least two female vice presidents](#) (Asahi)

- [Cartoon: Shan Shan, Yuina and Yuma](#) (Kanagawa Shimbun)
- [Cartoon: The Babe Ruth of Japan](#) (Asahi)

SECURITY

Okinawa grade-schooler hurt by window that fell off U.S. military helicopter

All broadcasters led with reports on an incident in Okinawa this morning in which a grade school pupil sustained a slight injury to his left arm after what appeared to be a window fell off a U.S. military aircraft that was flying over the school ground adjacent to Futenma airfield. The U.S. military reportedly admitted later that the component in question – a 1-meter-square window – belonged to a CH-53 helicopter. About 30 students were on the school ground when the object fell off the aircraft. Okinawa Governor Onaga and Ginowan Mayor Sakima have already arrived at the school to survey the situation.

Chief Cabinet Secretary Suga told the press: “As this type of incident makes not only school officials and children but people across Okinawa nervous, it should have not happened.... As soon as we get detailed information from the U.S. military, we will respond properly by relaying the information to relevant local authorities, including the Okinawa prefectural government.” Defense Minister Onodera told the press that the ministry will ask the U.S. military to determine the cause and ensure safe aircraft operations. He reportedly added that it will ask the U.S. military to suspend CH-53 flights.

Newspapers filed similar reports, adding that the Okinawa Marines issued a comment on the mishap saying: “We take this situation very seriously and are conducting an investigation to determine the cause. We apologize for causing anxiety among residents.” Okinawa Governor Onaga told the press: “Only Okinawa has been exposed to danger. Its children and the lives and property of its people are being threatened for the defense of the security of the Far East. We must firmly inform the Japanese government and the U.S. military that this security arrangement is discriminatory [against Okinawa].”

- [Window falls from U.S. military chopper onto Okinawa school grounds](#) (Kyodo News)
- [Windshield from U.S. copter falls on Okinawa school's ground](#) (The Asahi Shimbun)
- [Japan, UK showing signs of reviving “alliance”](#) (Sankei)
- [Editorial: Use mobile, high-tech measures to guard Tokyo Games from terrorism](#) (The Japan News)
- [Governors nationwide negative about having Ospreys deployed in their prefectures, Kyodo News survey](#) (Tokyo Shimbun)

- [Opinion poll & results of Kyodo News Survey on Ospreys](#) (Tokyo Shimbun)
- [Ex-U.S. base worker appeals life sentence for killing Okinawa woman](#) (Kyodo News)

OKINAWA LOCAL PRESS

Parents call for suspension of U.S. military flights over nursery school in Okinawa

Okinawa Times and Ryukyu Shimpō front-paged reports saying that in response to the recent incident in which a small cylindrical object believed to belong to a U.S. military CH-53 helicopter fell onto the roof of a nursery school in Ginowan, a group of parents of children who go to the school visited Okinawa Vice Governor Tomikawa and Chairman Shinzato of the Okinawa prefectural assembly on Tuesday to present a petition requesting the prefectural government to urge both the U.S. and Japanese governments to suspend flights of U.S. military helicopters over the nursery school until the cause of the incident is determined.

In a related development, the papers wrote that the school has received a dozen phone calls and email messages accusing it of “fabricating” the incident since Dec. 8 when the U.S. military denied the possibility of the object in question falling from one of its helicopters.

- [Former base worker files appeal against life imprisonment](#) (Okinawa Times, Ryukyu Shimpō)